

the Saturday night before sailing with you on Sunday. That is, if you should ever take me sailing again, after the way I've been today."

There. It was set right squarely between them. The sail flapped as her hand faltered on the tiller.

"Steady at the helm," he cautioned. She leaned on the tiller until the sail firmed against the wind. "You and Bernie must have had one hell of a time last night." His jaw muscles flexed, but he still did not open his hooded eyes.

"Bernie?" She laughed hollowly. "Why, I was out with Johnny and Harry and your old friend Mary. We closed up the Officers' Club." She waited for him to say something.

"All I know is that when I called for you this morning, Bernie was just leaving."

"Looked real suspicious, didn't it?" she pouted, "I told you he had just come over for breakfast, because I couldn't see him any other time this weekend. What's the matter? Did you think he *stayed* for breakfast?" She ran her free hand playfully through the thin blond hair on top of his head. He reached up and pulled her down in the cockpit beside him and kissed her hard and mean.

The C-boat swung in a crazy circle until he grabbed the helm and set it back on course. Somehow, she knew that this would be their last sail together. She bit her lip and breathed long and deep to keep from heaving.

## The Sisters

Diane S. Masters

JAN walked briskly to the door of her sister's home and peered through the screen.

"Anybody home?" she yelled.

"I'm in the bedroom, Jan. Come on in," her sister answered.

Jan found Judy combing her hair. She was wearing a navy linen suit with a fitted jacket and a straight skirt. At her throat she had fastened a small imitation rose. Her dark hair and the dark suit made her pale delicate features seem even more pale and delicate.

"Just get up?" Jan inquired.

Judy's look was damning. "I've been up over two hours," she stated. "I took Tommy out to Bob's folks and then came right back and started getting ready."

"Where're you going?" Jan wanted to know.

"St. Louis. Madge called this morning about ten. She has to go over to see her mother and wanted someone to go with her."

"Well, for the love of Mike," said Jan disgustedly. "I didn't drive fifteen miles just to turn around and go back! I wanted you

to help with my wedding plans . . . the guest list and the reception and . . . Didn't you get my letter?"

"Day before yesterday," Judy assured her. "I tried to call you this morning, but you had already left so there wasn't anything I could do."

"But stay home," Jan snorted.

"I thought it would be a good chance to look at dresses; at least we'll know what they have in stock," Judy went on talking, ignoring the comment. "I laid some books out for you to glance over, and could you do a little picking up for me, Jan? We're having company tonight. Gads, here's Madge now."

She rushed around hunting out a pair of white gloves and a handkerchief. "We shouldn't be gone more than three hours." Jan followed Judy into the living room and sank down on the divan. "Tell Bob to pick up Tommy when he comes in from work." The comment floated back to Jan on a breeze of 'Kiss Me' perfume and Viv lipstick.

"Three hours, my foot," muttered Jan staring at the spot where her sister had been standing. She stood up and surveyed the room. It was quite messy: newspapers and magazines thrown around; Bob's shoes on the floor where he had dropped them; small aluminum popcorn bowls and empty glasses adorning the endtables and the TV set; Tommy's rocking horse in the middle of the floor; his pajamas on the chair; his toys scattered everywhere.

"Small wonder," breathed Jan, "that she wanted me to do a little picking up."

She collected the popcorn bowls and the glasses and carried them to the kitchen. With breakfast dishes still on the table, at least two days' dishes on the cabinets, and the stove piled high with dirty pans, it looked worse than the living room.

If this be marriage, thought Jan, California, here I come!

Judy and Bob had been married six years ago, she figured. Judy had done real well at first. She had kept the house decently clean, had fixed breakfast at six every morning, and had tried hard to be a good wife. Then their mother had died, and less than two months later Judy had Tommy by Caesarean. That was the turning point, Jan decided. After that, Judy was sick a lot and couldn't do much, so Bob pampered her endlessly. A dog fed liver on a silver plate for nearly four years certainly wouldn't bark for a bone, thought Jan. Why expect other than a dirty house and a carefree attitude from Judy?

At five-thirty Jan stopped and took account of her work: beds made, house picked up, dishes washed and put away, bathroom cleaned, house dusted and cleaned. Not bad doings in such a short time, she thought. Of course Tommy wasn't here. It'd have been heck to look after him and try to clean house too.

A car pulled in the drive. Jan reached the side-porch just as Bob was getting out of the car.

"Hi, brother," she hailed.

"Don't call me any brother of yours," he retorted. "Where's Judas?"

"She went to St. Louis. Left orders for you to pick up Tommy at your folks."

"Well, I'll be damned," he muttered. Then "How long 'til supper?"

"Hour or so, I guess," Jan replied. "If you're hungry, I'll fix you a bite. I need the practice."

"No thanks. I think I'll go on out to Mom's. Maybe I can get my pole fixed and do some fishing. Tell her I'll be in about eight."

"I don't blame you for refusing my cooking, but aren't you going to have company?" she asked hesitantly.

"Hell with 'em," he said. "I'd rather have catfish for breakfast. Throw me some old clothes down in the basement; I'd better change."

"Look, brother, I'm no slave."

"Throw me down some clothes, dammit, or I'll tell where you're going on your honeymoon!" His eyes sparkled devilishly.

"Okay, you bum!" She saluted and marched to the bedroom where she dug some old clothes out of the closet, wondering as she did so whether or not Bob and her sister ever joked with each other and if they were able to talk things over as she did with her fiancé.

"BVD's, Levi's and T-shirt," she yelled at the basement door. "Look out below!"

"Thanks a heap." The reply came from below mingled with splashing water.

Jan fixed herself a glass of iced tea and curled upon the divan with a magazine. Bob honked the horn as he left, and being engrossed in an article called "Making Marriage Work," Jan merely raised her glass in reply.

When she woke up, she saw Judy standing over her.

"Back already? It's only seven-thirty!" Jan sat up, rubbing the sleep out of her eyes.

"Where's Bob?" asked her sister.

"Fishing," said Jan flatly.

"That idiot! I told him we were having company tonight. He's got the mind of a two-year-old," Judy said sarcastically.

"Now, look," started Jan.

"Oh, forget it. I don't want to hear it," snapped Judy. There was a pause. "Did you do the ironing?"

"The ironing!"

"Don't get all excited! I just asked," said Judy. "Say, I saw the cutest dresses at Reigel's. They were ballerina length . . ."

"Forget it," Jan interrupted. "I don't want to hear it."

And she left, slamming the door behind her.